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## BOOK REVIEWS.

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*Le contrat de travail : Le rôle des syndicats professionnels.* By  
PAUL BUREAU. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1902. 8vo, pp. 271.

THE object of Professor Bureau has been to portray the conditions of the French factory employees and to compare them with those enjoyed by the industrial wage-earners in other countries. His work is a powerful argument for organization into trades and professional unions. In such unions and in similar organizations of manufacturers he sees the only protection against the bitterest foe of both. The strikes of November, 1900, at Elbeuf gave to the author ample opportunity to observe the absolute lack of organization among the French factory employees, and their indisposition and inability to make an effort for improvement. Elbeuf, Professor Bureau says, had been selected for his field of observation because its population, largely composed of the laboring class, represents one of the quietest, most orderly and law-abiding types of the French industrial wage-earners; while the relations generally between employers and employees in France are very unsatisfactory, having displayed decidedly anarchistic tendencies, which must be held responsible for many of the sharp conflicts between capital and labor during the last three years. Elbeuf practically depends upon its textile industry, in conjunction with the trades incidental to it. The factories are long-established, having in some instances passed from the great-grandfather down to the present owner. The last decades, however, have forced great changes in the system of manufacture, and consequently in operation. Large factories with hundreds of employees have taken the place of numerous small workshops of which the one had performed this and the next another operation in the manufacturing process.

Improved machinery and sharp competition demanded lower prices for finished goods, and consequently more work for less wages. The factory system had been changed, but the relation of employers and their employees remained unaltered, the former exercising a sort of paternal authority over the latter, to which they willingly submitted and from which there was no recourse in case of disagreement. The factory workers had no understanding of what "union" meant; they

had no interest in organization ; of the 12,000 factory employees only about 750 were members of one of the three existing organizations, and their leaders soon found out that it was an easier matter to rouse the masses to a state of riot than to unite them for concerted movement.

The author finds an object-lesson for his countrymen in the history of the English machinist strike of 1897. The English machinists, he says, had strong organizations, an immense strike-fund had been collected beforehand, and the sympathy of the English people was in their favor. Every detail of the strike had been well arranged, and the movement was championed by trustworthy and able leaders. No violence, coercion, or intimidation was resorted to ; no property was destroyed ; the 110,000 persons involved in this great contest conducted themselves in a way that reflects credit upon their nationality. It was a contest of strength between two well-organized, well-managed organizations ; and, says Mr. Bureau, a similar strike would have been impossible in France. The French people are not ready for organization ; the principles of unionism have first to be taught to be appreciated ; the factory workers of Elbeuf were unable even to come together and to discuss their situation among themselves in an intelligent manner. Therefore, says the writer, it was foolhardy and characteristic of the French to enter into any strike. They had no plans, no organization, no chosen leaders, and, worst of all, they had no financial resources ; that they were successful must be attributed to circumstances. Their employers were taken by surprise, at a time when they had to operate their factories in order to fill obligations for goods and when they themselves were not organized. The strikes were not systematic nor pre-arranged ; they were spontaneous, without order or consideration. Some factory workers went out while others remained at work, each individual desiring to act for himself and without due regard to his fellow-workmen. The childlike actions of some of the strikers illustrate the planlessness of the movement. They had demanded a stipulated increase in their wages, and this being granted to them to their satisfaction, they went back to work. But another number had gained from their employers a still higher increase of wages, and the former upon learning of this went on strike again.

In other instances, where employers did know how to take the individual striker at his weak point, they often met his demands with a flat refusal. Some organization, however, was perfected by the workers during the strike-period, and it was but natural that these organizations and their leaders were credited with the results of the strikes—the

employees for their victory and the employers for their defeat. The latter were the first to profit from their experience. They formed an organization, agreed upon a uniform wage-scale for all establishments, and even went so far as to bring suit against some of their employees for breach of labor contract and quitting work without due notice. The court rendered verdict in favor of the plaintiffs, and this put a stop to all further strikes. The French people, says the author, fail to recognize in strikes a normal expression of personal privilege, and the laboring classes, if for the moment they have no personal interest at stake, ignore all association teachings of labor organizations, objecting to discipline, and prefer their old go-as-you-please ways.

To prohibit employees from joining labor organizations or to refuse recognition of their chosen leaders is a great mistake, says Mr. Bureau. Any person has the privilege of appointing counsel with authority of representation. Trusts and corporations select their representatives; and the same privilege must be accorded to labor organizations. It is still more unwise to discharge or blacklist labor leaders. The employer in this way often loses his best men; for, as a rule, only persons capable of exercising authority and influence are elected to leadership by their fellow-workmen. Labor organizations offer to employers a guaranty that agreements entered into will be kept as long as they are in force, and this enables the manufacturer to enter into contracts for work based upon fixed wage conditions. For wage-earners organizations are protection; sharp competition, on one side, and the clamor of unemployed, on the other, too often jeopardize advantages secured after much strife; but labor organizations are ever on the alert to guard against such dangers.

Manufacturers have been forced to adopt strict factory rules and demand compliance from their employees. The employer feels that he is not receiving the consideration he deserves, and his objection to the action of the factory workers is met by them with the retort that he is an unscrupulous tyrant.

Both parties are wrong, says the writer; both have become a plaything in the hands of a greater power—competition. Competition demands the greatest amount of labor for the smallest amount of wages; it is heartless, relentless; it is the cause of the social evil. Competition forces the manufacturer to be saving in construction and arrangements of workshops, in safety appliances and in sanitation. Competition presses the wife and children of the laborer into the factory service, it destroys home-life, and its everlasting demand is for still cheaper labor.

Many writers hold capital responsible for these conditions, but, says Mr. Bureau, such accusations are not well founded; employers who from personal inclinations would defraud their employees are rare. It is by force of circumstances that they seek to pay wages as low as possible. Another general error is that improved machinery has brought higher wages and shorter working hours; the lamentable conditions of the laboring classes in the early fifties have to be attributed to improved machinery and the individual labor contract. Professor Bureau states that with the introduction of improved spinning and weaving machinery the misery of child labor assumed horrifying proportions; that such poor creatures, often but eight years old, had to work seventeen hours a day. But, says he, it is wrong after all to hold the manufacturers responsible for these cruelties; it is the mailed fist of competition that has forced them to play their part in this terrible drama.

The French laborer must learn again to live in a manner worthy to be called living; he must cultivate his wants in order to make higher demands upon life; and that after this change has been perfected improved wage conditions will come, must come as a natural consequence; and that the resources of wealth are large enough to insure comforts to every toiler. Organization should be the pass-word to this.

Repeated reference is made to the labor organizations in the United States and England. They are, says the writer, composed of the best elements of the population; their influence is felt everywhere—in legislation and in every branch of commerce. They raise their members to a higher standard, intellectually and morally; they care for their sick and disabled members, and support the widows and orphans of their departed comrades.

Public opinion in France, Mr. Bureau says, is not in sympathy with labor organizations, but such opinion is based upon ignorance. He tries to shield labor organizations against the accusation of tyranny against non-unionists. A false claim for personal liberty, he says, is a pretext of the non-unionists to hide their egotism. While some actions of labor organizations may seem harsh, it must not be overlooked that they had to struggle hard, often making great sacrifices for a common interest, and that the non-unionist has profited from the labors of organizations. The personal liberty of the unorganized is to work long hours for low wages and to starve.

The different stages of relation between employers of labor and

labor organizations, Mr. Bureau pictures in the following way: (1) The employers discharge the unionists or keep as many non-union men as possible. (2) A secret boycott is resorted to against the unions. (3) The unions are recognized, but secret agitation is kept up. (4) Employers form an organization themselves. (5) The unions are recognized in full, and now employers find that arbitration with unions is beneficial to their business and that the unions further harmony in their workshops. The claim that the higher wages demanded by labor organizations are ruinous to the commercial interests, Mr. Bureau meets with the statement that the two leading industrial countries of the world, the United States and England, have the most and best labor organizations.

Labor organizations, the author concludes, secure to the toilers better wages, foster self-respect, and make the laboring class the best citizens of their country.

This new study of Professor Bureau has been carried out in the excellent manner to which we are used in his works. He has touched the keynote of a social problem; his arguments are forceful and to the point; he is an enthusiast as to organizations, and his statements to foreign labor bodies are perhaps a little open to objection. He tells his countrymen some unpleasant truths, to be sure, and his book may not find with them undivided appreciation; but it deserves warmest recommendation and should be taken for what the author intended it to be—a guide to the laboring classes and their employers in bettering and guarding their respective positions in the great commercial struggle.

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ST. PAUL, MINN.

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*Der deutsche Kapitalmarkt.* By RUDOLPH EBERSTADT. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1901. 4to (?), pp. vi+280.

AS THE title suggests, this monograph by Dr. Eberstadt is an investigation into the conditions of the German investment market. He takes up the prevailing opinion that the economic development of Germany during the last few years has been too rapid, that the available resources of capital have not been adequate for the expanding industries. That there is a lack of capital Dr. Eberstadt does not deny. The money stringency is reflected in the high rate of interest. But it is into the claim that this dearth of capital is caused by the *demands of industry* that the author inquires. The validity of this